Thin Ice: Jewish Power in a Changing World, An Interview with Mark Weber Part 1-3

The entire basis for the ascendancy of the Jewish power structure over the West is about to be shaken -- but will Western man and his hard-won freedoms survive the cataclysm?

ILLUSTRATION: When he was still free -- David Irving addresses a large crowd in Budapest, Hungary.



American Dissident Voices broadcast for by Kevin Alfred Strom

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TODAY WE HAVE as our guest once again the writer, speaker, historian, and -- increasingly -- international spokesman for those who dare to speak freely on the vital issues of our time, Mr. Mark Weber, Director of the Institute for Historical Review. Welcome to American Dissident Voices, Mark.

WEBER: Thank you very much, Kevin; that's a very generous introduction.

KAS: And a well-deserved one, in my opinion. It was good to see you recently in northern Virginia, Mark. I hope you'll be coming back in a more official capacity in the near future.

WEBER: There will be an IHR meeting there in July; that's in the works right now.

KAS: I very much look forward to hearing you speak. It's been too long since we last spoke on the air -- about eight months, I think -- and I wonder if you could briefly let our listeners know what the Institute has been up to during that time.

WEBER: A lot of things. We're very gratified by the increasing popularity of our Web site. The traffic continues to grow, as does the number of subscribers to our News and Comment e-mail subscription service. We're producing a whole line of CD and DVD recordings, which has been very successful. This is important because DVDs and CDs are now replacing the older media of videotapes and audiotapes. Additionally, I've continued to do a lot of radio interviews and have made quite a few public appearances in just the last few weeks. Many of these have focused on the recent crackdown on dissidents in Europe for violations of so-called "Holocaust denial" laws, and I've focused especially on the case of David Irving. We maintain a steady program of media outreach, which is an important part of what we do because it's very important to reach people who are outside of our own circle, so to speak.

KAS: Who has interviewed you recently, Mark?

WEBER: In the immediate aftermath of the David Irving sentencing on February 20th I did a number of interviews, including one with the BBC in London, another with Radio Netherlands, another with the English-language service of Iran's short-wave external broadcasting system, and one with the Times of London. I also appeared as a guest on some radio shows that are broadcast here in the United States. As I mentioned, we try to maintain a steady media outreach because it's very important to reach people other than those who already are familiar with our work. We don't want to just "preach to the choir," but reach those people who normally see and hear only what the people who control the media want us to see and hear.

KAS: It sounds like you're doing excellent work reaching out to the mainstream. You mentioned David Irving, who is a British historian and is probably one of the most widely known writers of history. If there is such a thing as celebrity in the field of history, Irving has certainly attained it. He's a best-selling author and a well-known

scholar and investigator. And yet, this man is behind bars today -- and the story of his captivity is not as widely known as it should be. Can you tell us, briefly, what's going on in the Irving case right now?

WEBER: David Irving is the author of more than twenty books, a number of which have been bestsellers, many of them highly acclaimed by critics. In fact, some of his books have been obligatory reading at Sandhurst, West Point, and at universities around the world.

Irving made a visit to Austria last November to speak to a small meeting in Vienna. While he was there he was stopped by police and arrested on a warrant that was issued sixteen years ago on the basis of two lectures he had given. That fact by itself is amazing, because normally any crime committed that long ago would no longer be actionable under ordinary statutes of limitations.

However, because he had referred in these lectures to "mythical gas chambers," he was arrested and held until his trial on February 20th, at which time he was sentenced to three years' imprisonment just for having uttered a couple of sentences two decades ago.

No other violation of so-called Holocaust denial laws has gotten such international attention. In nine or ten European countries -- and in Israel -- it's now a crime to publicly dispute the official, orthodox, Holocaust extermination story. There are numerous aspects of this situation that are really bizarre; in fact, it's hard to believe that such laws even exist.

In the United States and in most other countries, people are free to make all sorts of provocative statements about history and even about current affairs. You can say that it was really George Bush who organized the 9-11 attack on the World Trade Center and you won't be prosecuted for it. You can advocate the return of Communism and the authorities will do nothing. But if you say anything that disputes the official Holocaust story in a number of European countries, you will be imprisoned, fined, or punished in other ways.

KAS: In those countries the Holocaust orthodoxy is protected more stringently that even any kind of church doctrine. In fact, I don't believe church doctrine is protected

in those countries.

WEBER: That's right. One of the important aspects of the Irving sentencing is that it came in the aftermath of the tremendous furor over cartoons that appeared first in a newspaper in Denmark, and later in some other countries, that Muslims around the world found very insulting. But almost everywhere in Europe the publishing of those cartoons was defended on the principle of free speech. It was said that even cartoons, images, or writings that offend the sensibilities of Christians or of Muslims are permissible, because the governments of European countries try to uphold the principle of free speech.

But at the same time, any questioning of Holocaust orthodoxy results in these amazing punishments. The Irving case is certainly the most famous of them, but it's by no means the only one.

KAS: It was reported that Irving actually decided to plead guilty in this case. Is that true?

WEBER: Yes, it is, and he explained his reason for doing that. Irving said that if Austria had a law making it a crime to wear a yellow necktie, and he had then worn a yellow necktie while there and been arrested for it, he would have had to have plead guilty to breaking that law. Well, he did speak of "mythical gas chambers" in these two lectures he gave sixteen years ago. He reasoned that this did, in fact, violate the law, so he pled guilty. Now this is speculation, but many people expected or thought that because he pled guilty, he would be sentenced to time served or given a suspended sentence and allowed to leave the country. However, he and many other people were surprised when he was given a three-year prison sentence.

KAS: I heard that he recanted some of his questioning of Holocaust orthodoxy in an interview he gave prior to the sentencing.

WEBER: He said that his views on the Holocaust have changed. It's a little unclear exactly what his views are now because they have changed over time. After the sentencing, he gave two interviews in which he again said that he did not believe Hitler gave any order to exterminate the Jews of Europe, so people have been a little confused about exactly what his position is on some of these subjects.

In any case, the reaction to his sentencing has been amazing. Because his books are so widely known and because he's so well known around the world, this particular "Holocaust denial" case received far more media attention than any other that has ever occurred in Europe. It's been very gratifying to see almost universal condemnation of the sentence against Irving and of the Holocaust denial laws in Austria and other countries in Europe under which he and others have been persecuted.

The only voices expressing support for the sentencing of Irving have come from groups like the Anti-Defamation League, the Simon Wiesenthal Center, and a few other predicable Jewish Zionist sources. Newspapers across the United States and Europe and around the world have spoken out against Austria's law, not in the least because it's so selective and one-sided. The Holocaust story is the only chapter of history that's legally protected and it's the only one for which people are punished for doubting.

KAS: What were some of the more noteworthy organs taking that position?

WEBER: In Britain there were editorials in the London Times, and in the Guardian, but the condemnation has actually come from around the world. Many of the opinion pieces have pointed out the double standard in Europe that permits people to make statements that offend the religious sensibilities of Christians or Muslims, but punishes in this draconian way offenses against Jewish sensibilities. That's been a very typical reaction of newspapers and of intellectuals around the world.

KAS: Are there any elements in the Jewish power structure that think perhaps these denial laws are a step too far?

WEBER: Yes. Deborah Lipstadt, who is probably David Irving's most famous -- or infamous -- adversary, has taken that position. Even she, who was involved in a widely publicized libel case with Irving a few years ago, said that the effect of punishing him in this way is to make a martyr out of him. And there have been a number of other Jews who have expressed dismay that the effect of sending David Irving to prison has been to turn him into a martyr for freedom of speech.

Irving has now become the most prominent prisoner of conscience -- or political prisoner, if you will -- in the Western world today. But he's not alone. Ernst Zundel has been behind bars for more than three years now without ever having been found guilty of any crime. He's currently being tried in Mannheim, Germany for violating Germany's so-called Holocaust denial law, and his case has gotten quite a lot of attention there. Europeans feel increasing embarrassment about these strange Holocaust denial laws, because they can see just how one-sided and hypocritical they really are.

KAS: What is the current status of Zundel's trial?

WEBER: The trial began in November and has been moving slowly over the months, but just the other day a courtroom session ended in furor -- as it has before -- with shouting by Zundel's attorneys and the judge, and the trial has now been postponed indefinitely; it's unclear when it will resume.

The defense lawyers for Zundel have been very combative and feisty and have put up a very spirited defense. This is dangerous for them, because the judge has threatened to punish them for making statements that express many of the same views that Zundel himself has expressed.

I want to give your listeners some idea of just how bizarre these laws are. Under these European laws, people are punished for making even factually true statements that contradict Holocaust orthodoxy. David Irving was arrested and found guilty in a court in Munich some years ago for making a speech in 1988. In that lecture he said that the gas chamber shown to tourists at the Auschwitz I main camp is a phony postwar reconstruction. At his trial, he asked the court permission to call as a witness to this fact the curator of the Auschwitz State Museum in Poland. The court denied his request. Both the Auschwitz State Museum and many other historians have acknowledged that the so-called gas chamber at the Auschwitz I main camp -- that's been shown to hundreds of thousands of tourists over the years -- is a phony postwar reconstruction. Even though Irving's statement was true, the court fined him ten thousand marks. That fine was later increased to thirty thousand marks, and, just for having made this statement, he was forbidden ever to enter Germany again.

Now under normal law, truth is an absolute defense. If you make a statement that's

true, the truth of it should protect you from being punished, but that's not how things work in these bizarre Alice-in-Wonderland-style prosecutions for "Holocaust denial."

Another case that I find even more remarkable occurred in the 1990s. In 1998 a German court convicted a sociology professor, Dr. Robert Hepp, of violating one of these laws because of a single sentence that he had written in a book -- one in which he referred to the mass-gassing story as a "fairy tale." The amazing thing about this is that the sentence he wrote was in Latin -- of all things -- and he was punished for violating a law against "popular incitement." How a single sentence, written as a footnote in a book in Latin could be considered "popular incitement" is hard to understand, but the court ruled that this sentence constituted dangerous popular incitement, so he was found guilty.

Another case, in France, involved Jean-Marie Le Pen, the leader of that country's National Front party. In 1997 Le Pen was found guilty of violating the French "Holocaust denial" law for having referred to gas chambers as "a detail of Second World War history." Le Pen pointed out at the time that neither the multi-volume memoirs of Winston Churchill, the World War II memoirs of Dwight Eisenhower, nor the wartime memoir of Charles de Gaulle makes any mention at all of gas chambers. But for referring to gas chambers as "a detail of Second World War history," he was found guilty and ordered to pay a fine of fifty thousand dollars to publish the court's decision in French newspapers. This is just bizarre. People can make any number of provocative statements in these same European countries, but offending Jewish sensibilities is punished this draconian and hypocritical way.

KAS: Le Pen didn't even question the orthodox version of the gas-chamber story. He merely said it was a detail of history.

WEBER: That's right. One of the remarkable features of this phenomenon is that people like Le Pen and Irving are routinely referred to as "Holocaust deniers," but the public is never told what it is that they have actually said that "denies" the Holocaust. As you pointed out, it's not a denial of the Holocaust story to say that gas chambers are a detail of Second World War history. Le Pen didn't dispute the existence of homicidal gas chambers in German camps during World War II, but merely referring to it as "a detail," was considered "denying the Holocaust." That fact alone points out the absurdity of these laws and the way they're applied in Europe.

KAS: Another member of the National Front in France, Bruno Gollnisch, who is also a member of the European Parliament and a professor at the University of Lyon, lost his parliamentary immunity merely for saying that historians should decide the question of the Jewish Holocaust.

WEBER: That's right. It's important to keep in mind the origin of these laws. David Irving was called a "Holocaust denier." Strictly speaking, the law under which he was convicted was an earlier version of the current Holocaust denial law in Austria. For his reference to "mythical gas chambers" at Auschwitz, he was actually convicted of violating a law that makes it a crime to "revive National Socialism" in Austria. His statement was construed by the Austrian court as an attempt to revive Nazism. This law and the similar laws in Germany were imposed on those countries by the victorious Allied powers at the end of World War II. They are imposed victors' laws, not normal legislation enacted by the people's representatives. Austria later strengthened its law to make it specifically a crime to "deny the Holocaust," which is now legally defined as downplaying or whitewashing genocidal actions of the National Socialist regime during World War II. That was the legal foundation of the case against David Irving.

The existence of these laws in other countries, however, such as in Poland and Spain, is the result of a concerted effort by international Jewish organizations.

In 1982 the World Jewish Congress announced the start of a campaign to persuade and pressure governments to outlaw "Holocaust denial." They systematically worked to get these laws enacted in one country after another in Europe. Prior to that time, such laws had existed only in Germany and Austria. Laws specifically forbidding Holocaust denial were not enacted by other in European countries until this campaign by the World Jewish Congress began to put pressure on them.

The organized nature of the campaign to introduce such legislation can also be seen in the demands made by the International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists, which met in June 1998 and announced a campaign to introduce laws of this kind in as many countries as possible. Now, having said that, it seems that Holocaust denial laws have reached their high tide, as it were. The international reaction to Irving's sentence and to the existence of these laws in general has been so negative that's it's hard to see how these organizations are going to be successful in promulgating similar laws in any other countries now.

KAS: I understand there was recently a debate in Britain in regard to an effort to impose such laws there, but the effort failed.

WEBER: Yes. Before Tony Blair became Prime Minister, he announced that if he did become Prime Minister his government would introduce a Holocaust denial law in Britain. After his government assumed power the matter was further explored, but a decision was made not to try to introduce such a law in Britain, probably for tactical reasons. It's very hard to word such a law in a way that it will not seem obviously hypocritical and one-sided.

As I've said many times, justice that is applied selectively is not justice, it's a form of injustice. Making it a crime to question one official version of history or one chapter of history, but not any other is not justice; it's a form of injustice. Anyway, the Labour government decided against trying to introduce such legislation in Britain, and as you know, it has been having trouble even applying the laws that it already has on the books against fomenting and inciting racial hatred.

KAS: How many people are now imprisoned in Europe for questioning the Jewish version of the Holocaust?

WEBER: Most of the sentences that are handed down for Holocaust denial in these countries are not prison sentences. Most of them impose fines and this has happened in quite a few cases.

In prison right now is David Irving, of course, in Vienna.

Ernst Zundel is imprisoned in Mannheim.

Also imprisoned in Germany is Germar Rudolf, who was punished for having made and published a scholarly investigation of the technical aspects of gas chambers at Auschwitz. He had to flee the country to avoid prosecution, traveling first to Britain and then later to the United States, where he eventually married and had a child. Our government, however, in its eager determination to uphold our immigration

laws, arrested him last November and deported him to Germany, where he was promptly thrown into prison and where he is now serving the sentence that was imposed years before. He will be standing trial again in Germany for new violations of the law.

Another person in prison is Siegfried Verbeke, a Belgian citizen who was extradited to Germany for violating its Holocaust denial laws and is currently incarcerated there.

Other people in Europe have served prison sentences for violating these laws, but have been released. One of them lives in Switzerland, a man named Gaston Armand Armaudruz. Several years ago he wrote piece in a newsletter that he publishes in which he said that he didn't believe the gas chamber story, and he was arrested for it. His newsletter has a circulation of only a few hundred, but this man, who was in his eighties, had to serve a prison sentence for writing this.

The Frenchman Robert Faurisson has also served some time in prison in his country. He has been released, but he has also had to pay very heavy fines for statements he has made about World War II and German policy toward the Jews during the war.

Another Swiss citizen who was indicted under one of these laws is Jurgen Graf, a teacher and researcher who has written several books and who spoke at one of our conferences. He was found guilty of violating Switzerland's Holocaust denial law and was sentenced, but he fled the country and is now living abroad.

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Free speech is under attack -- both direct attack from the Jewish establishment and indirect attack as we lose our freedoms as a wider war looms in the world. We'll be back next week to continue our interview with Mark Weber, Director of the Institute for Historical Review, as we talk about these and other vital questions on American Dissident Voices.